



ASLEF

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THE FUTURE OF RAIL



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Where we stand on High Speed 2

THERE seems to be some confusion about our policy on national investment in a truly modern railway across the whole of the UK with infrastructure and traction fit not just for the 21st century but for a greener, integrated system that meets the needs of both passengers and freight.

Those of you who have heard me speak know our view is that privatisation has failed because, other than the forced investment, post-Hatfield, of £30 billion, investment has come centrally, from government or via Network Rail, and there is no long term strategy in place.

We have highlighted the disproportionate spend per head in the south-east against the investment elsewhere and the lack of joined up thinking around procurement that has left us with rolling stock that is, on average, 35 years old and cascaded to the regions.

Talking at every forum we can, and to politicians from all parties, we have highlighted the need to grow capacity not only for the forecast population and passenger growth but for the year-on-year growth in freight that, in the north alone, is forecast at 3% between now and 2030, without any modal shift from road.

Our policy on HS2 was based on socio-economic reasons initially as, post-recession, it was the only major infrastructure project proposed and would generate thousands of much-needed jobs. The business case became stronger with the inclusion of the north-east and north-west hubs.

We would, ideally, like to see HS2 running the length of Britain, building from Scotland and the south at the same time and meeting in the middle, linking into HS1 and going via Heathrow. Our vision is not shared but we welcome all investment. It is not enough, we need more long-term thinking, and we should have started years ago!

Finally, I urge you where you can to support fellow workers in Unite, FBU, CWU, NUT, NASUWT and the NHS in their struggle for their future and our services!

Mick Whelan, General Secretary



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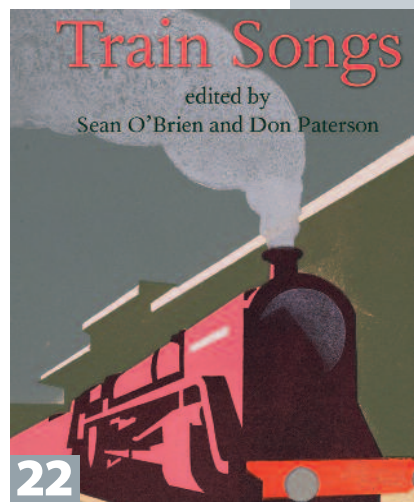


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ABOUT ASLEF

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Oh what a circus! London Mayor's cocktail of cuts

ASLEF activists were out in force in London, working alongside members of other rail unions, and protesters from disabled and pensioners' groups, in support of an Action for Rail campaign lobbying passengers over plans by the Conservative Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to sack hundreds of staff across the city's transport system.

Mick Whelan, general secretary, and Simon Weller, national organiser, were joined at Oxford Circus by Bob Crow of the RMT and Manuel Cortes of the TSSA to protest at proposals to close ticket offices at stations across London Underground; remove guards from trains on

London Overground; and slash the total number of employees.

Polls show an overwhelming number of passengers are opposed to the plans, which will be published in detail this month. Groups such as Transport for All, Disabled Passengers Against Cuts and the National Pensioners' Convention all want to keep staff on stations to help passengers with problems.

Mick said: 'A year after the London Olympics, when transport workers in London moved millions of tourists quickly and safely through the capital, during the Diamond Jubilee as well as the Olympic Games, isn't it utterly ridiculous that the legacy – the



Mick Whelan and Simon Weller leaflet Tube passengers at Oxford Circus in the heart of the capital

legacy that Boris is always banging on about – for Londoners and those who travel to and through the capital is a Tory Mayor determined to shed

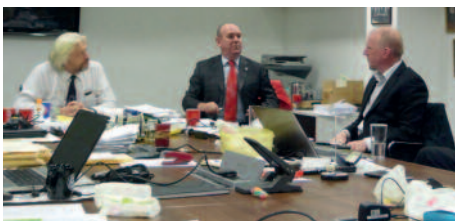
hundreds of jobs on the Tube, the trains, and stations across London? Londoners deserve the same standards this year – and next – that we offered those who visited these shores in 2012.'

Smart thinking

EMMA PENMAN wasn't the only one inspired by a long jump legend...

Staff at Arriva Trains Wales had a rare treat when Lynn 'the leap' Davies delivered an inspirational talk on motivational skills. Lynn, now president of UK Athletics, won gold at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and set 17 British and Commonwealth records in a phenomenal career. The session, organised by ASLEF's Learning Partnership Programme, was part of the Learning Through Sport initiative which parallels sporting ambitions with personal, every day aims.

Lynn explained how to make your goals achievable, and the importance of breaking things down into short term, realistic targets. He advocated a SMART model – Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely – which can be used in any situation where you need to achieve a specific result. Very interesting and absolutely inspirational!



Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, was invited to speak to our executive committee ahead of planned industrial action which was, at the last minute, postponed. The EC was keen to hear the FBU's position – and to offer support – in its battle to preserve pensions and jobs, terms and conditions.

Matt laid out, in some detail, the timeline of the often tortuous negotiations, and the intransigence of the employers, and said how grateful fire fighters across Britain are for support from members of other trade unions. He added: 'In many ways the FBU is like ASLEF. We are both craft unions, and most fire fighters, like most train drivers, are in the union.'

Mary Creagh has switched jobs with Maria Eagle in Labour's Shadow Cabinet



Now Mary

Mick Whelan, Simon Weller and Tosh McDonald met Mary Creagh, the new Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, and Labour MP for Wakefield MP, at Westminster last

month. They discussed a range of topics, including the franchising of the East Coast main line and the rail freight industry. Mary acknowledged the importance of freight to the health and safety of the railway network and pledged to work closely with the union to develop the party's policy on rail.

Brussels delivers wrong package

Mick Whelan was joined on a protest outside the European Commission's offices in London by Dick Fisher, District 6 Organiser, Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, Katy Clark, Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran, Grahame Morris, Labour MP for Easington, Bob Crow of the RMT, Manuel Cortes of the TSSA, and

Stuart Howard of the ITF.

It was part of a co-ordinated day of action called by the European Transport Workers' Federation to protest about Commission proposals to force privatisation on countries across the continent.

The innocuous-sounding Fourth Railway Package, the Commission's

plans for a 'single European railway area to foster European competitiveness and growth', is a new set of rules and regulation designed to impose British-style privatisation on rail services in every EU member state.

Mick said: 'Privatisation hasn't worked in Britain and it won't work in the rest of Europe. It's not the right model for Britain and it's not the right model for the European Union.'



School's out for summer

ASLEF delegates including Simon Weller, Nigel Gibson, Collette Gibson, Les Muir, and Howard Kaye (above right) joined many other activists from the labour movement at a rally in Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk,



in September to celebrate the Burston Strike School – the longest strike in British history.

It began in 1914 when two teachers, Annie Higdon and her husband Tom, at the village school, were sacked for taking the side of the farm labourers, and their children, and for standing up against the landed gentry and the despotic

right-wing rector of the parish church. Sixty-six of Burston School's 72 children walked out to join the Higdon's Strike School, initially in a tent on the village green, which ran until 1939, when Tom died.

'Next year,' said Nigel, 'is the 100th anniversary of the Burston strike and I hope we have a good attendance not just from District 5, but also from ASLEF in general, because it's not just a landmark in the history of the labour movement, but a great day out, too.'



In like Finn

Finn Brennan, the newly-elected organiser for District 8, is gearing up for battles with Boris Johnson as he tries to deskill the workforce on London Underground.

He said: 'I would like to thank ASLEF members in District 8 for electing me as their District Organiser. It's a huge honour and a massive challenge. I am especially grateful to Steve Grant and Terry Wilkinson for the advice, help and support that they, along with my colleagues on the trains council, and health and safety council, have

given me.

'I know that with big cuts to budgets in TfL, and the introduction of new technology, there will be battles ahead as we fight to defend our members' interests and protect our health and safety. We also face a Mayor of London and a Conservative government that despise working people and our trade unions.

'But across District 8 we have a great team of committed reps and activists and a membership who have always shown that they are prepared to support their union. I will do my best to repay the trust the members have put in me.'



ASLEF, with the British Transport Police, Network Rail, the Samaritans and East Midland Trains, won a coveted safety award at the National Rail Awards for collaborating on a suicide prevention programme.

It's the first time a trade union has entered the industry's Oscars. More than 1,000 rail employees, including Andy Botham and Nigel Gibson, who helped devise the programme, attended the ceremony in London.

Off the rails



TOSH McDONALD, ASLEF's vice-president, is now known to friends as Freddie Firebrand. Why? Because, after he got a standing ovation at the Labour Party conference last month (see page 13) for his speech calling for the return of the railways – and other public services – to public ownership, he was branded Britain's Looniest Leftie by the *Sun*. Times are clearly

tough at Wapping, because the paper's picture desk could only dig up an old photo of Tosh sporting short and back and sides. Tosh is wearing his hair long again these days – conference chair Keith Vaz playfully mistook him, with his shoulder-length white hair and beard, for tax avoider Richard Branson as he strode from the floor to the podium in Brighton – but, under a rather weird caricature of Che Guevara, Britain's biggest selling daily paper opined: 'Firebrand Tosh McDonald, boss of rail union ASLEF, took to the conference stage wearing a Harley-Davidson T-shirt – and then demanded that trains, utilities and telecoms be returned to the state's control.' What a lot of Tosh...



SUSAN KRAMER, giving her first speech as Minister of State for Transport to the Railway Engineers' Forum, set out 'the choices we face as a country that are not about party politics – HS2 is far too important for that.' She pointed out that, while demand for rail has doubled in twenty years, 'We haven't built a new main line railway north of London for 120 years. There is a point when patching up isn't enough. Britain needs HS2 because we are running out of capacity on our most important routes.'

EXASPERATED MANAGERS at Wiener Linien, which runs the U-bahn in Vienna, are so fed up with the antics of some passengers that, after catching a couple having sex, and another with a horse in a carriage, they have ordered a clamp down on anti-social behaviour. Couples caught kissing, groping, having full penetrative sex – or carrying a horse – face a fine of £40. Ditto eating fast food on the Tube. Though not necessarily, they add, all at the same time...

A REPORT in the *Evening Standard* branded Britain's rail companies the 'Great Train Robbers' after new figures revealed that some fares have more than tripled since privatisation. Virgin and First Great Western are the worst offenders, according to transport editor Matthew Beard, with prices hiked by 210%. Tube fares have risen six times faster than incomes since Boris Johnson became Mayor of London in 2008.

A CYCLIST who dodged through a level crossing barrier at Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire, and came within inches of being killed by a Greater Anglia train, has been formally cautioned by British Transport Police. CCTV footage of the 26-year-old woman's 'stupid' action went viral; Nigel Gibson warned of the dangers on BBC *Look East*.

CHUKA UMUNNA in waspish form on David Cameron and George Osborne: 'The real problem is not that they're Tory – it's not ideal, but I can live with that! – the problem is they're wrong. The worst economic recovery in history due to their failed plan.'

500 CLUB: M Deary (with number 140) was October's winner, scooping the prize of £334.

Debate on mega trucks goes down to the wire

PHILIPPA EDMUNDS, manager of Freight on Rail, reports from Brussels on the latest in the mega trucks row

Debate about cross border mega trucks continues to dominate the revision of legislation on the weight and dimensions of HGVs. With your support, we have managed to highlight the road safety dangers, the congestion and pollution implications, as well as the impact on rail. We all know it is going to be a hard battle to stop cross border traffic of mega trucks because the European Commission has cleverly implied that the decision rests with each member state which is what most ministers in each country normally want to hear.

I managed to undermine the latest pro-mega trucks research carried out for the European Parliament by insisting that our consultant peer review this research and by briefing relevant MEPs in advance of the research hearing on 5 September. The next hurdle was another event in the parliament on 17 September where our campaign managed to highlight the uncertainties around mega trucks.

As it stands, there are two clear opposing

camps, where MEPs have decided their positions. So we need to carry on lobbying MEPs and MPs to influence undecided politicians because, ultimately, agreement has to be reached between MEPs in the European Parliament and ministers of transport in member states.

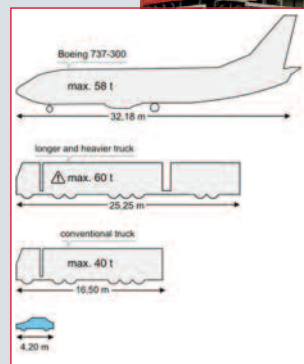
I also chair the network of pan-European organisations opposing mega trucks as well as working closely with the chair of the Transport Committee, Brian Simpson, who is the rapporteur and lead MEP on the file.

The next stage is asking MEPs to submit amendments to the legislation in November upon which the Transport Committee will vote in February 2014. The current plan is for legislation to go before the full Parliament in April, the last meeting before the European elections.

While the British government says it will not allow mega trucks here, the reality is it will come under huge pressure from the road haulage lobby, on competition grounds, to



Red lorry, yellow lorry... either way, they're too big for our roads. As our graphic shows, these extra long lorries will take up the space of a jumbo jet on the streets of Britain



allow mega trucks. The UK has already buckled to pressure from the industry by allowing 7ft longer trailers. We need our government and our MEPs to say no to mega trucks not just on our roads, but across the continent of Europe.

Mega trucks, which are currently on trial on British roads, should be restricted to local authority designated routes on road safety grounds, say transport experts. The Campaign for Better Transport, and the Technical Advisers' Group, have written to Patrick McLoughlin, the Secretary of State for Transport, urging him to introduce designated HGV routes in towns and cities to protect pavements and property, reduce the risks to vulnerable road users and ease the financial burden on local authorities.

Making dissent a criminal offence

ASLEF has written to MPs to express concern about the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill.

Mick Whelan says he is 'amazed' that any government could publish such a bill without giving full consideration to its consequences and 'dismayed' that there has been no consultation about these hugely controversial

proposals which threaten the free speech of campaigning organisations including trade unions.'

He adds: 'ASLEF supports regulations which keep big money out of elections. But this bill covering rules for third party campaigners has the potential to make dissent a criminal offence.'

'As an organisation which operates a political fund, my



We want to keep the right to lobby our politicians

union is concerned about provisions which reclassify what counts as election campaigning, alters activities which constitute campaigning; and cuts spending caps by up to 70%.

TICKET TO RIDE

Norman Baker has announced plans for a pilot scheme to sell long distance rail tickets on a single-leg basis to allow passengers to more easily mix and match when planning a return journey. The then Rail Minister said: 'I am determined to end this confusing and frustrating system whereby the price of single fares for long distance journeys can be similar to those of returns.'

Network Rail improves ESR

A revised system of emergency speed restriction procedures has been agreed at the Traffic Operations Management Standards Committee following successful trials. The revision relates to circumstances when signallers have to stop and caution trains for an ESR prior to the erection of ESR boards and will read: 'If an emergency speed

restriction is imposed, and before the speed restriction equipment has been set up, the signaller will tell the driver of a train to pass over the ESR the actual speed limit that has been imposed by the engineer.'

'It will no longer be necessary for the drivers of all trains to proceed at no more than 20mph prior to the erection of the speed restriction equipment but drivers must travel over the restriction at no more than the speed given by the signaller.'

'This also means that only trains which would

normally be running at a speed higher than the ESR to be imposed will need to be cautioned by the signaller. For example, if an ESR of 60mph is imposed, it will not be necessary to stop and advise the drivers of trains classes 6, 7 or 8.'

This change is expected simplify the process, removing the 20mph restriction, and reduce the possibility of confusion between signaller, engineer, and driver as only one speed quoted throughout all conversations. It is expected to reduce the risk of SPADs and improve both performance and punctuality.

Getting women on board

LEE JAMES, ASLEF's equalities adviser, reports from the Labour Party's national women's conference in Brighton

FOR the last three years, on the eve of its annual conference, the Labour Party has held a meeting for female members to discuss issues specific to them. Year on year, the number of women attending has grown and last month 1,000 delegates came together at the Hilton Brighton Metropole, making it the biggest political gathering of women at a party conference, ever.

It's not surprising that women are becoming more politically engaged, given that they are being hit hardest by the Conservative-led coalition's austerity measures and the

economic downturn in this country.

The ASLEF delegation consisted of Nicky Sapey, WRC member for District 4, Wendy Hurst, WRC member for District 5, and me. We were joined by Collette Gibson, WRC member for District 7, attending for her CLP.

Ed Miliband had that day launched the Labour policy on child care which would see access to affordable child care being given to all, via schools, from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. In his presence, during an open mic session, Wendy, to much applause, told conference that, as a train driver, she welcomed the policy but asked what would be done to address the needs of shift workers who need child care outside these hours? Ed obviously listened as he name checked her in his address to the women's conference but – typical politician – he avoided



Shadow Rail Minister Lilian Greenwood, Ed Miliband and Yvette Cooper at the Labour women's conference

answering the question!

The day was a mixture of set piece speeches, policy seminars, and open mic sessions, with a strong focus on engaging with those who attended. Labour

seems keen to get women on board and increase the number of female MPs. They are already ahead of the Conservatives who have more millionaires than women in their cabinet!

‘We are building a better party so we can build a better Britain.’ Ed Miliband, Labour Party leader

Level crossings risk assessed

MICK HOLDER, of ASLEF's health and safety department, reports on a new Network Rail website

Network Rail has published details of the 6,100 level crossings in use in England, Scotland, and Wales on its website. The project aims to include up-to-date risk assessment information to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It will reveal the level of risk the

crossing poses.

Each level crossing has its own page which can be found searching either by postcode or from an alphabetical list. There is a photo of each crossing with a map and information about the location; what type it is; which train services run through it; the number of users; some simple risk assessment detail; and a means for reporting misuse, near misses and accidents.

It may be an



opportunity for health and safety and company council reps to raise any issues in their TOC or FOC to see if there can be a dialogue involving ASLEF reps with Network Rail.

The web site can be accessed by visiting www.networkrail.co.uk/transparency/level-crossings

Fifteen years too long

ZOE MCGOWAN joined ASLEF activists at a vigil for the Miami Five outside the US embassy on Grosvenor Square

Mick Whelan spoke out at a protest demanding freedom and justice for five falsely-accused Cubans jailed in the United States. Protesters called on

President Barack Obama to free the five, working against right-wing Cuban exiles, who were arrested in Florida in 1998 and controversially

charged with spying. Fifteen years later, four of five are still wrongly imprisoned in the US.

Mick said: 'Fifteen years is too long to be imprisoned for something you haven't done. Too long to be denied communication with your wife and family. It is now in President Obama's hands to

grant the freedom and justice rightfully deserved.

'We also call on the US to reduce hostilities towards Cuba as a nation, and remove the blockade which restrains Cuban development in many areas. Above all, we send a message of solidarity and hope to the Miami Five.'

CUTTING SUICIDES

Network Rail and London Midland are introducing improved security lighting and mid-platform fencing in a bid to reduce the number of people who commit suicide on the railway. New fences and sliding gates at eight West Coast Main Line stations – Aspley, Bletchley, Cheddington, Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley, Leighton Buzzard, Tring, and Wolverton – will, they hope, build on the success of a partnership with the Samaritans, involving thousands of posters with helpline numbers across the network, as Ian Beckett reported in last month's *Journal*, reduce the number of deaths.

MAKING TRACKS

Amtrak, the publicly-funded National Railroad Passenger Corporation in the United States, carried a record 31.6 million passengers last year. 'Amtrak moves people, the economy, and the nation forward everywhere the trains go,' said CEO Joe Boardman. 'Demonstrating the value and convenience of a national rail network.' Chairman Tony Coscia added: 'In towns all across America, Amtrak brings economic opportunities for people, businesses, and communities to prosper.'

DULCE ET DECORUM EST



Mark Hardie, a driver for South Eastern, has produced an ASLEF poppy badge in two sizes to raise funds for the Royal British Legion poppy appeal this month.

Winning the battle of ideas for Britain



The Conservative-led coalition's Age of Austerity is failing this country.

STEVE HART, chair of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies, explains how you can help chart a new course for Britain

TRADE UNIONS here in Britain were quick to work out – and quick to point out – that the Conservative-led coalition's austerity policies would be disastrous for this country. Our campaigns were often, initially, quite lonely, as the media regularly spoke of the coalition's cuts as if they were somehow unavoidable. But today, with worrying economic statistics constantly making the news, there is a much wider recognition that the Age of Austerity that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has imposed on Britain has failed.

The figures don't even tell the worst part of this story. Because the raw statistics in the headlines hide the real misery and uncertainty of unemployment, poorer living standards, and the piece by piece dismantling of our much-lauded, and much-loved, welfare state.

The debate about living standards has added new significance as it is a reminder that austerity and current government policies are acting together in the interest of the richest 1% of our society. Millionaires enjoy the Chancellor's tax cuts, while millions of the rest of us fall victim to tax increases and cuts in public services. Ever-growing numbers of people are receiving low, and lower, wages. This is directly linked to the weakening of workers' bargaining power

through the decline of trade unions, resulting from the anti-union laws of the Thatcher and Major governments in the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1979 and 2010, trade union membership, and collective bargaining coverage, more than halved. Such a decline led to a fall in wages, and higher levels of inequality, as well as the dramatic growth of top pay, deeply destabilising our economy.

Low wages faced by hard workers under this Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition undermines working people. Rail workers are subjected to uncertainty about their jobs, poorer working conditions and attacks on their employment rights. And, of course, the government has done nothing to address the shortcomings of our privately owned, and fragmented, railway system which has failed to deliver the more efficient, better value, and higher quality service we were promised, as well as becoming increasingly costly to the public purse.

If Britain is to build a new and fairer economy then investment in infrastructure and public services, as well as a new settlement for trade unions, are essential. Collective bargaining and trade unionism play a key role in an equal society, not only in delivering a more even distribution of income, but also in

promoting growth.

That is why it is so important that we win the battle of ideas. For three decades, organisations sidelining our trade union values and the post-war settlement have dominated the debate. We cannot let this continue. We are cranking up the ideas machine and as the coalition government shows no signs of giving up on austerity, the appetite for a progressive alternative has never been stronger.

Class, the Centre for Labour and Social Studies, a think tank founded last year by the trade union movement, has been established with the clear role of developing policies which promote trade union values. Class aims to provide the labour movement with the research, evidence, materials, and intellectual arguments that we need to campaign for change. It brings together trade unionists, economists, academics and other experts who will help chart a fresh course for Britain.



More than 50,000 people marched in protest against the coalition's cuts during the Conservative Party conference in Manchester last month



George Osborne has subjected Britain to a new Conservative Age of Austerity

ASLEF is committed to Class and is very active in influencing the policies Class promotes and we have worked with Mick Whelan to produce work supporting the return of the rail industry to the public sector and also on the importance of public investment in our national railway system.

But this is just the beginning. In our first year, Class has made headway in the political arena and, with support from a growing number of trade unions, has an increased presence beyond London. After a series of successful regional launches, and a national conference in November; we can only go from strength to strength.



Join Mick Whelan and many more at Class: The Conference on Saturday 2 November at the TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1. You can book your ticket at www.eventbrite.co.uk/6122960941 or get more details about the great debate at www.classonline.org.uk

**Whatever life throws at you
ASLEF will help to protect you.**



**We offer a range of services to ASLEF members
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- Personal injury away from work
- Road traffic accident injury
- Industrial disease or illness
- Criminal law representation (for work-related matters)
- Free will writing service
- 30 minutes free telephone advice for any non-work issues such as landlord disputes, neighbourhood disputes, matrimonial and consumer issues
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Wanted: a fare deal for passengers not smoke and mirrors



Londoners need a freeze on fares, not the tax break offered by Boris Johnson. ANDREW ADONIS, Secretary of State for Transport in the last Labour government, makes a capital case for investment in public transport...

I AM the proud possessor of a Gold Card giving me bus and Tube travel in zones 1 and 2 for the whole of 2013 for £1,168. Boris Johnson has said that when I buy my next Gold Card, in January, he wants to give me nearly £300 back through a new tax break on annual season tickets.

If this sounds too good to be true, it is. Read the small print and it turns out that this tax break for annual season ticket holders will be paid for by putting up the fares of all other Londoners, who either can't afford one or for whom it doesn't make sense given their work (or lack of work) patterns.

CLASSIC BORIS GIMMICK

We are into a classic Boris gimmick. His proposal – set out in two paragraphs tacked at the end of an anecdotal newspaper column on the joys of the No 38 bus and shopping in Oxford Street – would give a tax break for annual season ticket holders whose employers apply for it on their behalf, while other fares continue to rise above inflation.

There are lots of practical issues. Why only annual season ticket holders? What about employers who don't play ball?

But, more than this, there are fundamental issues of fairness. Boris claims it would be 'millions of tourists' who would pay more and that they 'probably don't even notice how much they are paying.'

But tourists are not the main victims. The



bigger losers by far are the great majority of Londoners who don't have season tickets, including swathes of lower-income and part-time workers for whom it wouldn't make sense even if they were affordable. The majority of fare payers use Oyster pay-as-you-go. In many cases they would be sensible to do so even if they could afford a season ticket, monthly or annual.

This is clearly a nonsense. So why is Boris punting it out at all? Because he knows there is rising discontent at years of fares soaring above inflation while wages fall below it. And he wants to say something – anything – which distracts attention from another impending above-inflation increase in January.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Behind the smoke and mirrors there is a serious problem. Millions of Londoners are caught in a transport cost of living crisis. The daily commute in London is among the most expensive in the world. A single journey in London costs more than twice the equivalent in New York, Paris or Milan and is a third more expensive again than Copenhagen. A zone 1-4 travel card is almost double the price of the equivalent in Berlin and three times more expensive than in Los Angeles or Rome.

Since Boris became Mayor of London in 2008, the cost of a single bus journey has increased by 56%, from 90p to £1.40. The price of a travel card from zones 1-6 has increased by £440 a year, a bigger increase even than for gas and electricity bills.

What Londoners need is a freezing of fares at the rate of inflation. Paying for this is a straightforward matter of priorities. There is that Boris cable car, carrying only 4,000 passengers a day, and falling, across the Thames compared to more than 6 million passengers a day who use London's buses. Then there are the tens of millions being spent on rolling out Boris's new Routemaster bus, together with the cost of extra staff needed to police its rear platform.

I am the last person to decry investment in essential public transport, having worked



closely with Boris to keep the building of the new east-west Crossrail line on track. More recently, I helped draw up a blueprint for Crossrail 2, a new line from south-west to north-east London, tunnelled from Wimbledon to Seven Sisters, which will be essential by the late 2020s to relieve the overcrowded Victoria, Northern, and Piccadilly lines and commuter rail services.

HIGH VALUE CONTRACTS

These two new lines will, between them, add about 20% to the rail transport capacity of the capital and bring large regions of London and its hinterland within easy reach of its commercial and retail centres. This will help generate millions of new jobs, homes and businesses.

The same would also be true of much-needed new crossings of the Thames east of Tower Bridge. The proposed Thames Gateway Bridge, between Greenwich and Newham, which Boris cancelled in 2008 because of its unpopularity with some suburban Tories, would otherwise be opening this year.

This is the point: the imperative is for high capacity, high value projects which meet the needs of London's fast expanding population, bringing big economic returns including extra tax revenue and transport fare payers.

These need to be the investment priorities, not expensive baubles which do little to increase capacity or reduce fares. London deserves better.



Brighton rocks for the future of Britain's railway industry

MICK WHELAN, ASLEF's general secretary, had a busy five days in Brighton at the Labour Party conference in September. It was a whirlwind week for Mick and the other delegates – Tosh McDonald, ASLEF's vice-president, Cliff Holloway, Euston branch, and Les Bennett, Bishops's Stortford – as they took every opportunity to speak at fringe meetings, lobby MPs, and engage with party officials, political advisers, and other delegates as well as listening to debates in the hall.

Mick said: 'We welcome what we have heard this week from Maria Eagle about the future of Britain's railways. We welcome, at last, some integrated thinking about our railways. And we welcome the opportunity, under a Labour government, to build a better railway for Britain.'

'Because we know that privatisation has proved to be a disaster for this country. Even Margaret Thatcher, that arch-advocate of privatisation, described the privatisation of the railway as 'a privatisation too far'. It

was a foolish, ideologically-driven, policy by John Major which has failed.

'The result has been soaring fares, which rise each year way beyond inflation, with hard-pressed passengers forced to pay more, and still more, money for their fares, when wages are standing still or falling, so the privatised train operating companies can make a handsome profit.

'Taxpayer subsidies have risen, too. As Maria Eagle said at the Campaign for Better Transport fringe meeting on Sunday night, we are now putting billions more into our railways and billions more into our buses. While the privatised train and bus companies make a private profit at public expense – often moving their money offshore.

'The result of privatisation has been soaring fares, greater public subsidies, older rolling stock, and more overcrowded trains.

'That's why we want to bring our railways back into public ownership. And it needn't cost a penny. As the franchises run out,



Mick Whelan (above right) joined Ed Miliband and his family at the Labour Party conference in Brighton last month

we replicate the success of the East Coast which brings money back to the Treasury.

'That is a policy which appeals to passengers who have had enough of soaring fares and privatisation. A policy which will

appeal particularly to commuters in the south-east of England, giving Labour the opportunity to win back some of the seats in the south, and east, which the party needs if it is to form a new government in 2015.'

Union link is not up for grabs now



KATY CLARK, the Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran, called on Labour leader Ed Miliband to have the courage to renationalise the railways. Even if he prefers to use another word or phrase.

Welcoming much of what Ed said in his leader's speech on Tuesday afternoon, and speaking ahead of the Shadow Cabinet reshuffle, she said: 'I welcome the fact that Maria Eagle, who I hope will stay at Transport, where she's doing some really good work, is moving, albeit slowly, to a position where we will, I hope, make a commitment to bring the railways back into public ownership, which would be a very popular policy.'

'We did not have the guts, or the political will, to do something about public ownership when we were last in government. We must have the will to do it next time.'

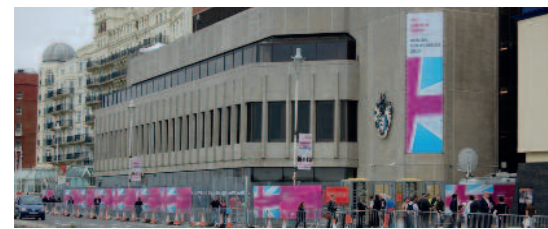
Speaking at the *Tribune Rally* in the Paganini Room at the Old Ship Hotel, she added: 'We must also make sure that the Royal Mail is not privatised and, if it is, that we will bring it back into public ownership. Without compensation. We must do everything we can to destabilise the privatisation process.'

Katy also called on Ed not to break the link between the Labour Party and the trade unions in Britain.

She said: 'The trade unions started the Labour Party. The Labour Party was created as a political voice for the labour movement. Trade unions are incredibly popular organisations. The relationship with the trade unions is not up for grabs.'

Flying the flag

The Labour Party conference was held this year in Brighton which, according to the journalist and author Keith Waterhouse, 'looks as though it is a town helping the police with their inquiries.' What provoked most comment from delegates, however, was the curious colour of the union flag logo



The entrance sign was red, but the rest of this year's signage was washed out or, as some cynics said, washed up

draped around the Brighton Centre on the seafront. Gone were the traditional colours of the flag – red, white, and navy blue – and, in their place, a weird, washed out 'contemporary

colourway' of pink, white, and sky blue. Delegates gave the new look the thumbs down, saying it looked like 'a Cool Britannia tee-shirt that's been in the tumble dryer too many times.'

News that David Cameron's newest minister, Ian Livingston, has joined the Conservative-led coalition after pocketing a £9 million golden goodbye from BT provoked this response from Kevin Maguire of the *Daily Mirror*: 'When they say "we're all in this together" remember the "we" are a filthy rich clique who know little, and care less, about the lives of ordinary people.'

Time to end the racket on our railways

Maria Eagle, in what turned out to be her last major speech as Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, before she swapped jobs with Mary Creagh at the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, promised that the next Labour government will offer a new deal for passengers and put a cap on fares.

In her keynote address, during the living standards plenary session on Tuesday, she said: 'David Cameron will always put the privileged few before working people. We can't be one nation if we price people off our transport system; if people can't afford to

live near their job, then find the cost of commuting goes up faster than their wages; if young people are told to stay in education, or find an apprenticeship, but then can't afford to get there.

'That's why a one nation Labour government will tackle the cost of living crisis. Banning train companies from hiking fares beyond strict limits. No more averaging out the so-called fare cap, but an actual cap. Not on some routes, but on every route.

'And it isn't just the level of fares that drives people to distraction. It's the feeling that the system is always trying to rip you

Increasing inequality is not an inevitable result of some sort of natural law. It is a political choice and an expression of the values and priorities of our current Prime Minister. He believes in a small state plundered by his rich mates.'

Angela Eagle, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, and chair of Labour's National Policy Forum

We're a one nation party

Mick Whelan joined Kevin Maguire, associate editor of the *Daily Mirror*, Glenis Willmott, Labour's leader in the European parliament, and Nick Lowles, director of Hope Not Hate, at a fringe meeting on Wednesday to discuss if Labour has a UKIP problem.

Mick said: 'We know they're a problem for the Tories because there is



always a rise of the right during a recession when things have gone wrong. UKIP is an issue but we can't, and won't, out-UKIP UKIP. A vote for UKIP

is a vote for the right and it's a vote for the wrong. We have to be clear in what we say. We invented the big society. Let's show we're a one nation party.'

NAVEL-GAZING ABOUT PARTY STRUCTURES



Paul Kenny, general secretary of the GMB, (left) speaking for 14 trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, 'nailed the gravity of Ed Miliband's error,' according to Kevin Maguire of the *Daily Mirror*, when he told conference: 'We think the real debate this week is about jobs, homes, living standards, employment rights; not irrelevant navel-gazing about internal party structures which, frankly, the British public don't give a fig about.'



Maria Eagle, speaking for the last time to the transport brief, at a Labour Transport Group fringe (above) and (left) from the podium in the conference hall

off. Isn't it time to end the racket on our railways and, once again, put passengers before profit?'

Speaking to Sophy Ridge of Sky News at a fringe meeting organised by the pressure group the Transport Hub, Maria underlined her commitment to HS2 and her determination to keep the East Coast Main Line in the public sector.

'HS2 – or, as I prefer to call it, the north-south line, because it's not just about high speed rail – is vital to British transport and to the British economy. We need new lines to carry more passengers

and to carry more freight – many passengers have to stand every day because there aren't enough seats on packed commuter trains – and many freight services are also running at near full capacity.

'We want a railway that offers better value for money to the taxpayer. And it is self-evident, looking at the East Coast main line, that the railway is being better run in the public sector. Franchises fall during the next parliament and that gives us an opportunity to do something about the way we run the railway in Britain.'

COLLETTE GIBSON, Braintree CLP delegate, reviews *Stand Up for Labour* at the Brighton Dome



My guilty pleasure is Michael McIntyre's *Comedy Roadshow*, so when I had the opportunity to see some of its stars live, in a fundraiser for the Labour Party, I jumped at the chance. Stephen K Amos expertly compered the night, drawing in the audience and using them to comedic effect in every link.

Port Talbot's Lloyd Langford was first on, using his dry delivery to leave us with aching jaws. Jo Brand's unique take on the world according to menopausal women was hilarious, with John Bishop matching her, and feeling the need to declare 'If you think I'm sexist [he was] Jo Brand was more sexist' [she was] but both were equally funny and had the audience in stitches.

Headlining was Eddie Izzard, a comedic taste I have yet to acquire. My companion declared that Eddie's was the most surreal performance she had seen in a long time. Jokes about human sacrifice, Charles I and God scuba-diving, cleverly leading to why we need a Labour government, were lost on me.

There was a smattering of politics, some Tory bashing, a great deal of comedy and fun, and a considerable sum of money raised for Labour.

If it's good enough for the East Coast, it's good enough for every other franchise.' **Ken Livingstone**

We pay for their investment so they can make a private profit

Tosh McDonald got a standing ovation from delegates on Wednesday morning when, at short notice, he was called from the conference floor to second an emergency motion calling for public ownership of the railways.

Speaking from the podium without notes, or time to prepare, Tosh said: 'Many good things have been said by the TSSA delegate, and many good things have been said by Maria Eagle this week, but there are some other things that need to be said.'

'The Tories are looking forward to the reprivatisation of the East Coast purely on an ideological basis. There is no business case for it, there is no economic case for it. £800 million by the end of this year put back into the public coffers from the publicly run East Coast!

'Now I could come up with all kinds of statistics to make it seem even better than it is, but I don't need to do that. I could compare the figures on the East Coast with some other franchises, intensive suburban franchises, but, you know, that wouldn't be a fair comparison, and we want to be fair because our arguments are right.'

'I'll give you an example of one that can be compared with East Coast. It's very similar. Both franchises



Tosh McDonald on the platform at party conference

run between London and Scotland, both are inter-city franchises, both have very similar timetables. One, in public ownership, takes 1.2% of its funding directly from the taxpayer and has made £800 million for us, plus the profits of over £40 million ploughed back into the network. The other, Richard Branson, Virgin, West Coast, gets over 13% of its income directly from the taxpayer and it doesn't put anything like the money back into the Treasury. Nothing like it! The case is there!

And when we say the argument against us, the argument to sell East Coast off again, is led by ideology, it is.

'Our ideology is the right one and we shouldn't be afraid to talk about the ideology of public ownership. I tell you

this, conference, whether it's the railway, the power companies, the water companies, gas or electricity, telecommunications, or the postal service, they are natural monopolies that should be in public ownership. And those that make a profit should subsidise those that don't make a profit.

'Isn't it a nonsense when we're told by the private power companies that they have to put our bills up, when rail companies put our fares up, so we can pay for their investment, so they can make more private profit! It's a nonsense!'

As delegates stood up to cheer him off the platform, Tosh muttered: 'Maybe I should come without being prepared more often...'

‘After many successful years in government, our party became out of touch from some aspects of the lives of the working people of Britain.’ **Iain McNicol**, general secretary of the Labour Party

○ **The next Labour Party conference – the last before the general election – is in Manchester from 21 to 24 September 2014.**

Off message



○ **SAMUEL ROGERS**, a minor poet, popular in his lifetime, but best known now for his accounts of his friendships with William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Edmund Burke, and Charles James Fox, wrote after a trip to the south coast in 1829: 'Brighton is still very gay and full of balls.'

Speaking of which, the Shadow Chancellor was on sparkling form at the London Labour Party's reception at the Hilton Brighton Metropole on Sunday night. Speaking at a lively party fuelled, appropriately, by bottles of London Pride, he told a long and amusing anecdote about driving down with his wife, Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, who was hard at work practising her speech to the national women's conference. As he drove, she read it aloud, concluding, according to Ed, with loud acclaim for the woman who broke through the glass ceiling, a giant of the Labour movement, 'Barbara Cartland'! As Ed dryly said, to peals of laughter, predictive text can, on occasion, be a dangerous friend...



○ **THE THINGS THEY SAY!** From Sky News' website: 'Sophy Ridge is political correspondent for Sky News and works predominantly on the channel's *Sunrise* programme. Sophy graduated from Oxford University in 2006 with a degree in English Literature and enjoys reading novels in her spare time.' Well, as Mandy Rice-Davies famously said after the Profumo scandal, she would, wouldn't she?



○ **LORD ASHCROFT**, the former Conservative Party treasurer, told a Fabian Society fringe meeting: 'Yes, I am a notorious tax avoider and I'd like you to know, in the confidence of this room, that I still am. And I'm proud of it! Every year, just before the end of the tax year, I see what my taxable income is and I give it to charity. I remain a proud tax avoider...'

○ **SECURITY FOR CONFERENCE** was much lighter and lower key than for many years. Delegates in Manchester in 2012 had to walk through an airport-style scanner arch, all bags were examined, and people had to take off jackets and belts to pass the metal detector test. This year, while passes were looked at, as long as the security guards – supplied by the anti-union firm G4S – liked the look of your face, you were in without being scanned or searched.

○ **MOST POPULAR PARLOUR GAME** at conference was counting the number of times a member of the Shadow Cabinet claimed that he or she was 'humbled' when they really meant 'proud'. Try it next time...

○ **MANUEL CORTES**, general secretary of the TSSA, was in remarkably upbeat mood despite news that his union's proposed merger with Unite has come off the rails.

○ **WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY** probably got it right when he wrote in *Vanity Fair*: 'A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a sponging-house in Chancery Lane.'

Bargaining to build a better Britain



Austerity is killing, not curing, the patient. KEITH EWING (left) and JOHN HENDY (right) explain why free collective bargaining is the best way to fix the broken British economy



THE sole justification offered for the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition's policies of austerity has been that there is a structural deficit in the finances of government that must be reduced. That the policies of austerity in fact have increased the deficit came as a surprise to no one. Indeed, austerity could have had no other consequence.

The real driver for the Chancellor's Age of Austerity is his desire to increase the share of the national economy consisting of profits and to decrease the share consisting of wages. To that end the Age of Austerity has been a resounding success.

DEPRESSING DEMAND

But the consequence of driving down the real value of wages is not just a painful cut in the standard of living of most people (although enhancing life for the very rich). It has also depressed demand, causing the loss of jobs and tax revenue and making the UK one of the worst performing economies in Europe.

Britain is now as unequal as it was at the end of the 19th century with all the repulsive consequences: unequal life expectancies, differential physical and mental health, lack of social mobility, unemployment, drugs, crime, hopelessness – and so on.

Obviously the share of the national cake occupied by wages must increase if any way is to be found out of the spiral of decline in Britain. It was once taken for

granted that this would be achieved through the negotiation of pay and conditions between trade unions and employers – a process called free collective bargaining. In our book *Reconstruction After the Crisis: A Manifesto for Collective Bargaining*, we make the case for the restoration of sectoral collective bargaining – that is, collective bargaining on an industry by industry basis.

ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

Collective bargaining of this kind was the policy of successive governments in this country for 75 years until Mrs Thatcher came to power. It was the principal mechanism adopted in Britain and abroad to increase wages, stimulate demand and reinvigorate the economy to end the Great Depression of the 1930s. The same remedy could be applied to the current crisis.

The reversal of government policy from 1980 onwards has caused collective bargaining coverage in Britain to plummet from protecting 82% of workers in 1980 to just 23% today (and falling). Labour's statutory recognition procedure had negligible effect. In western and northern Europe the average coverage remains at around 80% (though, as we show in our book, in the name of austerity, collective bargaining is being undermined elsewhere in Europe).

The restoration of collective bargaining goes beyond stimulation of the economy. The



loss of its protection has never been felt more keenly than today with a million people on zero hours contracts, permanent full-timers being substituted by temporary and agency workers, 3 million being denied protection from unfair dismissal by an increase in the qualifying period, and all 29 million workers finding their way to an employment tribunal restricted by a hike in fees.

POWER TO PREVENT

Collective bargaining is the only way of giving workers an effective voice and the power to prevent injustice in the workplace. But there is also a legal imperative that underpins the economic and social case to rebuild the wasteland of collective bargaining.

Whether the government likes it or not, the United Kingdom (like other countries) has obligations to promote collective bargaining under international treaties signed by both Labour and Conservative ministers since the end of the Second World War.

The failure over the last 30 years to comply with its international legal obligations has made the UK a repeated international law breaker, as international bodies have consistently found.

A fresh start is required, with a much more ambitious collective bargaining strategy, based on what we once had and on what successful European economies



still have.

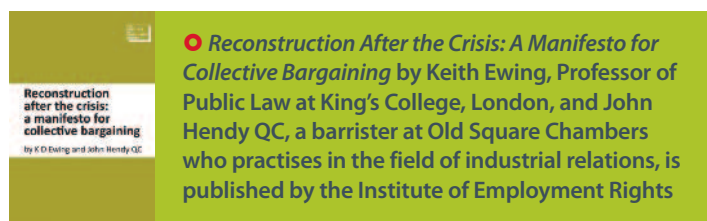
We propose multi-employer agreements that apply throughout each industrial sector, laying down terms and conditions that apply to every worker, whether or not their employer recognises a union. Enterprise level bargaining can still take place but on the basic floor established by the sectoral collective agreement.

RAISING WAGES

Sceptics will say that it is all too difficult. But we have done it before, in the 1930s, when wise minds realised that the crisis of that time could be solved only by raising wages, and that the best way to raise wages was to strengthen the collective bargaining structures first established by Parliament during the Great War to deal with the problems of reconstruction.

To achieve it will require the same commitment to the use of state resources today as it did then, most notably a commitment to create the structures within which collective bargaining takes place, to ensure that employers take part, and that the terms of collective agreements are observed.

It is a big challenge. But there really is no alternative.



Peak practice for Roo

Earlier this year East Midlands Trains company council rep ANDY BOTHAM became the first Labour councillor to represent his home town of Matlock on Derbyshire county council for 85 years. His daughter CHLOE BOTHAM asks him to explain his passion for politics

IN MAY, Andy Botham, a train driver for 23 years, and an ASLEF rep for 20, was elected as a Derbyshire county councillor for Matlock, helping the Labour Party take control of a council which the Tories had run since 2009. Andy, 45, was born and brought up in Matlock and, apart from ten years 'down south', has spent his life in his home town in the Peak District. He got 1,114 votes, beating the Conservative candidate into second place, the Liberal Democrat into third and UKIP into a distant fourth. 'No one can remember the last time Matlock had a Labour councillor,' Andy told the *Journal* at the time. 'I think it was Charles White and I went to a school named after him; that's how long ago it was.'

Glenis Willmott, Labour's leader in the European Parliament, and MEP for the East Midlands, in the August issue of the *Journal* called on 'more ASLEF activists to stand for political office' and cited Andy, as well as Mark Dowd in Sefton, Mick Lyons in Leeds, Alan Moir in East Dunbartonshire, and Tom Corbin in Salisbury, as train drivers who have made the transition from union activist to party politician.

JUSTICE IN WORKPLACE

Andrew – known as Andy or Roo – began driving trains for British Rail at Redhill, in Surrey, and returned to Matlock, and Midland Mainline, after marrying and having two children. His passion for politics has grown from wanting to represent drivers on industrial

issues to aspiring to represent them in Parliament. His interest, he says, began back in the days when he was second man to Gordon Everest on ballast trains. 'We used to discuss politics and problems for hours on end to while away the time and Gordon encouraged me to get involved as a local rep.' Andy says he became an active trade unionist because of a desire to see justice done in the workplace. He stood for an LDC position in 1993 and is now company council secretary.

'I saw, first hand, how unfairly my dad was treated when his health deteriorated. There was no recognition or compensation – which made me determined to make sure others didn't suffer like he did.'

I FLIRTED WITH ARTHUR

So he joined the Labour Party. 'I flirted with the Socialist Labour Party set up by Arthur Scargill, too, in the Blair period, due to his policies surrounding the war in Iraq, and the removal of Clause IV, when the party didn't represent working-class people. On the train I chatted to Tony Benn, who used to be MP for Chesterfield, about the Labour Party and socialism. He said Labour was the only progressive party that could get elected and bring about change and the only way of ensuring it happens is to get involved and change the party from within.'

He stood as a county councillor in Matlock at the local government elections in May. It was hard work – 'knocking on doors, producing newspapers and

delivering them in the wind and rain' – but he believes the financial help of ASLEF, and the training the union provides, put him in a position to win.

'We didn't think we would get the seat, at first, as there hadn't been a Labour councillor in Matlock for as long as anybody can remember, but we thought we would get a respectable vote.' In fact the last was Charles White, who was elected to Matlock urban district council in 1928; Andy, much later, went to the secondary school in the town named after him. White later stood for Labour against the Duke of Devonshire's brother in West Derbyshire and beat him by 561 votes to get a seat at Westminster.

A LOT OF PRESSURE

Through the night, watching the count, Andy knew it was going to be close. In the end he won by 22 votes. 'All the hard work paid off.' With little time to let it sink in, Andy was given the position of deputy cabinet member for jobs, economy, and transport.

'Within a week I was dealing with HS2 and the impacts and opportunities it would bring to Derbyshire. There are a lot of responsibilities, more than I initially thought, and having full-time employment as well, it is a lot of pressure – but I am enjoying every minute of it.'

'Without the support of fellow trade unionists, branches and officers at ASLEF it would not have been possible, though, so I am very thankful. I think the people of Matlock are ready for a change...'



Andy speaking from the podium at the TUC in Bournemouth this year (top); outside County Hall (above) and on the stump with Dennis Skinner, Labour MP for Bolsover, in Matlock in May (below)



From Josef Stalin in solidarity

THE September meeting of District Council 4 was held not at our usual venue, the Trade Union and Labour Club in Doncaster, but in the executive committee room at Red Hill, the Durham Miners' Association headquarters.

Delegates were amazed by the wonderful building, built in 1915, and the gardens with statues of former miners' leaders. Business was concluded in the morning, lunch was kindly provided by the miners, then Miners' Association general secretary Davey Hopper showed us around.

Many historic documents and artefacts are on display, ranging from items belonging to early Methodist miners' leaders, paintings, busts and statues, to items sent from Josef Stalin in solidarity. There are banners from the almost 300 pits that made up the Durham coalfield and a memorial to the brave men and women who went to fight fascism in Spain.



But, most impressive of all, is the amazing debating chamber with more than 280 seats, each representing a colliery, all now unfortunately closed.

You can feel the history of our movement in every brick of the place. To finish the day, we adjourned to the local pub for refreshment and more stories about trade union history. The next meeting is on 6 December, back at the Trades Club, followed by the district annual dinner; please make every effort to attend.

Tosh McDonald, EC member, District 4

Hold the banner high

The ASLEF North West District Council banner had its last ever outing at the TUC's Save Our NHS March in Manchester on 29 September. It is 65 years old and being replaced by a new up to date banner. It was one of many union banners proudly held up among the 50,000 plus marchers, with a good turn out of ASLEF members from the north west



including District Organiser Colin Smith.
Paul Costello,

Buxton & Peak Forest branch secretary

Mick Whelan handed out long service awards to Roger Stanbridge (50); Kevin Johnson (45); Gary Beeley, Leroy Richards and Phil Stokes (40); Mick Geary and Karl Maguire (35); Matt Pakes (25); and Ray Wilcock (retired).
Adrian Harnett, branch secretary



Upcoming events

SWINDON – 13 NOVEMBER

The gathering of former Swindon train crew for their annual get together will take place on Wednesday 13 November 2013 at 12.00 for 12.15 sit down at the Blunsdon House Hotel Carvery, Blunsdon, Swindon.

If anyone connected to Swindon Traincrew Depot would like to come just turn up on the above date. For further information ring Dave Manners on 01793 770114 or e-mail mannersdj@msn.com

HITHER GREEN – 15 NOVEMBER

This year's Hither Green depot annual reunion will be held on Friday 15 November at the Railway & Social Club, Beacon Road, London SE13 from 19:00. Everyone connected with Hither Green, past and present, is welcome.

ASLEF/NERSWA REUNION – 21 NOVEMBER

Annual ASLEF/NERSWA reunion on 21 November at the Gateshead Railway Club, Wellington Street, from 13:00. Old and current members welcome; buffet provided. Please contact Rob Porter, secretary, Gateshead & Newcastle branch, for details.

RMS – 8 DECEMBER

The annual RMS Buffet and Norwood Junction AGM is to be held on Sunday December 8th at Selhurst Railway Club. The AGM is at 12:30 with the Buffet at 14:30, all retired and ex Norwood Junction members welcome.

Living legend

To mark Buxton and Peak Forest branches' recent 120th anniversary, we invited GS Mick Whelan to attend our October meeting. Mick gave us the latest news on freight, and passenger companies, followed by a question and answer session. Five year membership badges were presented to Northern Rail drivers

Colin Fearn and Ian Smith, and FLHH driver Keith Jelleyman. In appreciation of 50 years' loyal membership a plaque was given to RMS Mike Peebles. Then, to much applause, a 40 year badge was presented

to Buxton depot's living legend Dave Nevell (below).

Paul Costello, branch secretary



• Pete Ward, of Northam depot, Southampton, retired after 35 years. At a celebration, attended by Graham Morris and Nigel Cummins and colleagues from Eastleigh, Fratton, and Bournemouth, he was presented with a ASLEF recognition certificate and a voucher for his local gardening outlet, so he can make the best of his hobby. And we all enjoyed a curry by Ed Bell.

Ian Jolly, ULR rep, Northam depot



100 NOT OUT: Three Bridges held its branch centenary celebration on Sunday 20 October. An enjoyable afternoon was had with a mixture of old and new members attending. Tony Hind welcomed Mick Whelan who presented eight 50 year medallions to Ken Chapman, Ted Dente, Aiden Lawless, Cliff Pattenden, Ray Young, Brian Boorer, Gordon Everest & Don Pew; a special recognition was presented



to Ernie White as the most senior ex-Three Bridges driver. Tony West addressed the celebration with a

poignant message. Here's to another 100 years... **Paul Eden, branch secretary**

Simon Weller and two members from Southern company council attended Eastbourne's branch meeting. Simon gave a talk on the railway pension scheme and what changes in the pension laws mean for our scheme, took questions from the floor, and made service badge presentation to members from 5 to 25 years.

Mark Jenkins, branch secretary

Derby sends its best wishes to Bro Colin Barnes who has been a lifelong member and loyal representative of ASLEF all his working life. Colin was for many years branch chairman and always conducted the business of the branch in a fair and democratic manner. His dedication as an LLC rep for CrossCountry drivers was an inspiration to us all, always going the extra mile to help his members. This was recognised recently when our EC member Dave Calfe presented Colin with an engraved ASLEF tankard. We wish you a long and deserved happy retirement.

Eamonn Tague, branch secretary

Paddington fountains



The function room of the Fountains Abbey in Praed Street played host to a large gathering, including Mick Whelan, Simon Weller, Tony West, Nigel Gibson, and Brian Corbett, to celebrate the long and loyal membership of a number of colleagues. Paddington branch secretary Steve Austin organised the evening, which was chaired with great aplomb by Collette Gibson.

Mick Whelan captivated the audience with his eloquent and very well-crafted rousing address. Tony West gave a very well presented and informative facts and figures address on the relevance of our Railway Pension Scheme. Five year badges were presented to Charlie Tocher and Paul Mustoe; a 10 year badge to Ian Dabbs, and 40 year badges to Andy Perrin and John Donnelly.

Michael Setchell, Paddington branch

James Martin collected his 50 year medallion from District 1 organiser Graham Morris – special thanks to Jonny Barnes, former Orpington driver and himself a medallion holder, who gave a great speech on Jimmy with a moment's notice – and Mark Selby received his 10 year badge. A great night with almost 50 members old and new attending and the food laid on by the Royal British Legion was excellent! **Eddie Brown, branch secretary, Orpington**



Mick Holder looks back through the pages of the Journal to November 1913 and a report on the Dublin lockout

VERY NEAR A SOVEREIGN

Wolverhampton branch reported: 'The Dublin strike, practical sympathy being shown when Brother Watson, off with his hat and went round, returning with very near a sovereign. It was decided to get out lists to help to defray the cost of the food ship.

Motherwell branch said: 'We had some very important business, considering the resolution sent by the West Wales branches re an eight hour day, the Dublin lockout, and the election of delegates for the trades council, with which we are now affiliated.'

Burton branch added: 'Brother Stubbs was presented with an executive committee's medallion for proposing 26 new members this year. The sum of 10/6 was collected for the Dublin relief fund and forwarded to Mr C Bowerman MP.'

TRIAL IN CARLISLE

Leeds No 2 branch passed a motion about the Aisgill disaster: 'We, realizing the difficulties of a locomotive man's work, desire to offer our sincere sympathy to Driver Caudle in his trouble and hope he will be acquitted at his trial in Carlisle.'

Stratford branch reported: 'The Dublin strike was discussed and a resolution forwarded to the executive committee to grant £1,000 at once and afterwards levy each member throughout the Society to cover the said amount. A collection on behalf of Brother Norfolk realized £11 6s. 5d. Brother Norfolk is in the distressing condition of growing blind through diabetes and has a wife depending on him.'

PRINCIPLE OF TRADE UNIONISM

In his General Notes, the editor wrote: 'The bulk of our members will commend the executive committee for its generous action in the grant made to the Dublin sufferers. Men, women, and children are suffering.

'The principle of trade unionism is being attacked in a most unscrupulous way and, should it succeed in Dublin, we would doubtless hear of its extension to the unions of Great Britain. The weekly grant of £100, in addition to the £200, set an example.'

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- Give your name, mobile number and email address to your branch secretary, to post on to head office. Your details will not be handed on to third parties.



Intercity 125



A fantastic turnout from Chester members for the 125 celebrations. Steve Farley, chair of the North West TUC, paid homage to the solidarity shown by ASLEF to the movement, especially the NUM, and thanked our GS and DO for their support in defending the attacks on the public sector.

Tony West, chair of the RMS, spoke about the way this government is treating our pensioners, and the need to safeguard the final salary scheme, under threat from rail companies. Mick Whelan explained how certain train operators are breaching collective agreements and trying to broker individual rest day payments to members. Colin Smith, chair and district organiser, talked about the history of ASLEF and Chester, thanked the speakers and presented them with Chester branch 125 badges.

We made a special presentation (left) to our Brother, friend and colleague Martin Murtagh, one of the most popular people on Merseyrail, who turned up after suffering a stroke. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Ripple Lane swansong



A very enjoyable social evening was held recently in memory of the closing of Ripple Lane twenty years ago, and they came from far and wide to attend. There was plenty of banter and reminiscing over a glass of ale. Our thanks to Margaret and Steve Wilson for an excellent buffet and Tony Wilson who supplied the music from his fine vintage collection of 78s and revived 45s. Howard Kaye and Nigel Gibson presented Frank Munns with his 45 year badge. **Cliff Blackwell, Tilbury branch**



Driver instructor Dave Henderson (left) and driver Ray Baker receiving their retirement certificates from me after 46 and 41 years on the railway respectively. A good turn out of drivers and other railway staff were there to see them off to join the RMS.

Richard White, branch secretary, Slade Green

The first annual Graeme Potter memorial trophy took place at Liberton golf club in Edinburgh on 16 September. Graeme was a popular member of Edinburgh No 2 branch who sadly passed too early. The golf tournament was contested by drivers and guards from the Edinburgh depots. But, in typical ASLEF fashion, we allowed an RMT member to win the trophy! It was a great day and gave us all a chance to remember our great friend, and ASLEF member, in a way he would have liked.

Chris Barrie, branch chair



SUNSHINE AT THE MILLGATE: Brilliant weather was a bonus for an excellent turn out for the annual reunion in July of friends and colleagues, from all FOCs and TOCs, who passed through Newton Heath depot in earlier days. One sad note was the loss of ten retired drivers since our last reunion. The room stood to remember them. Our thanks to branch chair and secretary and 105 committee for running this fund for 27 years; and to Mike Wood, John, Pat, and Doug Dyer for the superb buffet, not forgetting the 105 members because, by their continued support, this great day survives.

S Black, RMS Newton Heath

OBITUARIES

COLIN PEARCE MY SHARONA



Colin's untimely passing on 14 September, at the age of 53, was a shock to everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him. He was a straightforward man who liked a chat and a laugh and always took time to discuss things and help people. He loved to

walk and was often seen with his dog Sharona.

Colin began working on the Underground in 1983 as a direct recruit guard at Hainault on the Central line. He progressed through the grades to train driver before finally becoming duty manager at White City. He returned to his home depot of Hainault in 2010 which was a short walk from his home.

Our deepest sympathy to his wife Ruth and Colin's family.

Paul Mason, Leytonstone branch

STEPHEN THOMSON HIGHLAND GENTLEMAN

It is with deep regret that I report the death of Stephen Thomson (1929-2013). Stevie joined the LMS in 1945, when Oban loco was a majority NUR depot, but he opted to join ASLEF and was a loyal member for the rest of his working life. He served as LLC for many years, until poor health caused him to be accommodated and then accept ill health retirement. With his superb wit and sense of humour he was, indeed, a true Highland gentleman.

Michael Magnay, RMS

ARTHUR GODDEN SOUND OF MUSIC

Arthur Godden died on 31 July at the age of 83. Arthur started his railway career at Horsham, followed by Victoria. He did his national service from 1947 to 1949. He loved musicals, and all types of music, especially Frank Sinatra, and made many visits to the Albert Hall for concerts. Our thoughts are with his long time friend Peggy at this very sad time.

Ken Heydon, Battersea branch

TONY WINCHESTER LOYAL MEMBER

Tony Winchester has passed away after a short illness. He was 79. Tony spent all his railway career at Tonbridge, apart from national service in Malaya and Germany. He was on the LDC for many years, a loyal member, and his service was very well attended.

Dave Weddle, Tonbridge RMS



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER** feature. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

A day's work at the docks

We are sleepwalking to unmitigated disaster if we don't wake up to the possibility of this right-wing Conservative-led coalition government being elected again. It is possible, if the economy improves, so we need to keep informing the wealth creators, the workers, of the attacks being made on our rights.

I am old enough to remember when dockers had to stand outside the dock gate to be taken on for a day's work on the whim of the boss's foreman. Zero hours contracts echo that era again. Then there are the changes to prevent people taking rogue employers to an employment tribunal for unfair dismissal, etc. How are you expected to find £1,200 when you have just lost your job? It's a disgrace and the problem is no one thinks it is going to happen to them so it doesn't become the most important thing you are worrying about in this time of genuine financial hardship.

I expect ASLEF is taking up these issues as a matter of urgency, and hope we follow Unite's lead and pay the fee if any of our members find themselves in such a position.

Len Worboys, RMS

More notes in our pocket

In response to District line driver John Hardesty's complaint (September *Journal*) that he is discriminated against because he can't work his rest days, I believe he is showing a very narrow view of the implications involved. Certainly it would give him the chance to make some quick cash in the short term, but at what cost? London Underground has higher levels of spare coverage than any other train operating company and how many of these spares would be needed if all management had to do was throw a few quid at a driver when the need arose?

While you probably expect to get a job when you are spare it is not always the case, and do drivers really want to give up the chance of some time away from the intensity of driving just to chase money? Remember this additional earning power is at the whim of management so once you've become dependent on it don't complain when it dries up.

Another factor to bear in mind is the

CHANCE FOR A FEW PEOPLE TO MAKE AN EASY PROFIT

As an ex-Royal Mail employee of twenty years I was pleased to read Mick Whelan's article (October *Journal*) voicing ASLEF's opposition to the sell-off of the industry. During my service I saw Royal Mail move from a company which respected its staff to a profit-driven organization constantly attacking terms and conditions in the build-up to what was obviously a long-planned privatisation.

As we have seen a number of times in the past, privatisation and competition does not lead to lower prices and better service for the consumer as is always trumpeted by

the Tories. All it will mean – as demonstrated by the minimum £750 investment – is an opportunity for a relatively small number of people to make a fast and easy profit as is the Conservative ideal.

Speaking to ex-colleagues, it would seem that their terms and conditions will only be protected for three years. Which is why, if this is the case, a vote for industrial action looks likely.

What can the hard working postie look forward to after this time? A zero hours contract, maybe.

Mark Foreman, driver, Cambridge

clean salary we have is all pensionable, which is not the case with overtime, and if a culture of overtime working came in this could cause a painful adjustment on retirement.

We are probably unique in the railway industry in that we still have a continuous stream of new recruits; is it fair that these drivers should be denied a well-paid job with hard fought for conditions because some members feel a circa £50,000 salary is insufficient for them? Remember these could easily be our family members and if you looked outside our industry you'd understand what a lifeline these jobs are in these hard times.

So yes, John, we all like a few more notes in our pocket but I, along with the trains council reps, our executive committee member and district organiser, will be pursuing a policy of a clean salary, quality time away from work, 100% pensionable pay, and protecting the spares we have.

As you said yourself, most of the staff working rest days are on considerably lower wages than ourselves and I think you'll find with inferior agreements; and I don't think you have to look too far to see why. If that is

discrimination, then vive la différence!
Graham Dean, chair, trains functional

Question to be answered

I was rather upset and downhearted with the response to my letter regarding overtime working. I found the content aggressive and an attack on an individual – namely me. I thought ASLEF were champions in the eradication of workplace bullying? And, as a rep, I thought Bro Forsyth would be well aware of the policies on attacks on members?

Putting that aside, I pointed out that salaries and conditions were hard fought but, unfortunately, times change. It would be wrong for me to comment on my salary and if it's 'enough'. That was not the question. I was asking why I could not do voluntary overtime – not necessarily, I hasten to add, as a driver!

I do not accept the argument that it will reduce the number of drivers. No business in their right mind would reduce their workforce and increase their wage bill – it would be financial suicide. Bro Forsyth rather strangely suggested increasing the workload would increase the possibilities of an increase in safety-related incidents. If that's the case why

are ASLEF discussing reducing the working week to four days on, three days off, by lengthening the days we do work? People are moving further and further out of London because of the spiraling costs of housing. Does this not put extra strain on the individual because of the travelling time and all the extra stresses this causes?

I find the majority of people I speak to would be in favour, but only on a voluntary basis, and with guarantees of minimum workforce numbers agreed by the unions. The ones that are so vociferous in attacking even the slightest suggestion that we allow change tend to be the older members who have already reaped the rewards and don't need to start at the bottom of the housing ladder. A ladder they probably would not get on at the level they were able to 20 years ago!

The question still needs to be answered. Why am I and my colleagues being discriminated against?

John Hardesty, Earls Court

Speaking with a mouth full

The gagging bill is currently on its way through parliament. This Draconian bill will prevent people who have something to say being able to organise. The tosh peddled in the press says nothing about big money influencing elections and massive donations made to parties. It's smoke and mirrors as the bill doesn't tackle that, instead it targets charities, community groups, and campaigners through societies such as ASLEF. Maybe the sacred top 1% in this country don't want the rest of us involved in party politics.

Ed Miliband spurned a golden opportunity at the TUC to reiterate the link between the unions and the Labour Party and give voice to the millions of disaffected. The individual argument and the fallout from Falkirk put him exactly where the coalition wants him. Then again, we shouldn't let that naughty word **collectivism** stand in the way of what's happening right in front of us.

Si Goode, driver, Wolverhampton

Like a thief in the night

Having read the excellent ASLEF history books *The Lighted Flame* by Norman McKillop and *Engines & Men* by JR Raynes it becomes apparent that, except for salary, conditions are returning to an age when our brothers set up this proud union. Zero hours contracts are spreading like a disease, attacks on our pensions, discrimination on the issue of travel entitlements, shed work, train preparation all but gone from our duties. The list is endless. A fellow trade unionist quite rightly said 'they won't come banging a drum during daylight, telling you what they are taking from you, no, they will take your conditions slowly and quietly like a thief in the night' and boy are

they doing just that! Stick together, brothers and sisters, an injury to one is an injury to all.

Tony Dobson, Manchester

No Machiavellian monster

I'm no fan of Margaret Thatcher but I disagree with the comments of Ray Young (ex-Salop/Three Bridges) on the Falklands in the August Journal. While it's true that, at the end of 1981, an opinion poll gave her 23% after that her popularity began to climb and, when the war started, she was on 41%. Cuts to the defence budget affected everywhere, not just the Falklands, and while the Admiralty had been warning her that the Argentinians could take advantage it seems far more likely to me that she ignored it because she refused to believe that, as fellow right-wingers, and an ally, they would attack.

The Tories' landslide victory in 1983 has often been attributed to the Falklands factor but, more important, was the SDP/Liberal alliance which split the Labour vote and, in many seats, this led to Conservative gains. The Tories actually received 685,000 fewer votes than in 1979 and their vote share dropped by 1.5%.

Mrs Thatcher was not a cunning Machiavellian monster. She was incredibly

lucky, rather naïve, totally inflexible and not very clever.

Max Beard, Leytonstone

Disgusted by Tony Bliar

I wish to stop paying the political levy part of my membership. As a trade union I feel ASLEF does a great job for drivers but I do not agree with handing over money to Ed Miliband's Labour Party; as an ex-party member I have been disgusted with Labour ever since Bliar took over. Labour no longer represents the working man or British interests, they have become just as corrupt as the Tories. Labour are in the pocket of the CEOs just as much as the Tories; I feel there are no politicians with vision. Where are the Attlees, the Bevans and the Wilsons? I long to hear speeches about the 'white heat of technology' from politicians who really want to make a difference.

Steve Taylor, Aylesbury

Contributions to the political fund are very low cost, just 2.5% of your membership fee (between 5p and 15p a month) and supports all our campaigning work including Action for Rail, Freight on Rail, and campaigns against austerity and privatisation. Only a proportion goes to the Labour Party.

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Bridges Branch 213. Further info from Paul Eden (07952 482443) paul@homerdaz.com or Dave Mansfield (07816 960331) david.mansfield14@btinternet.com



COMMEMORATIVE badge to mark the 25th anniversary of the Clapham rail disaster. Each badge is individually numbered. £5 including p+p, cheques payable to ASLEF Bournemouth branch, from J Martin, Flat 1 Blenheim Court, 26 Marlborough Road, Bournemouth, BH4 8DH.



ENGRAVING: ASLEF driver based in Sunderland branch offers professional engraving at reasonable prices. I can engrave anything you wish, such as the ASLEF logo on a pint tankard which is pictured. For further details contact Paul Potts by email at ppotts1969@hotmail.co.uk

DENNIS BOSTOCK'S UNDERGROUND MEMOIRS 1968-2008 at £15 on a CD data disc containing 450 A4 pages, including photos, with free Ongar line and engineers DVD. Text details to 07599 018271. Pay by cheque or postal order only on receipt of discs. In ASLEF, and you, I trust.



FAVERSHAM branch is selling mugs and tee-shirts 'devoted' to Mrs Thatcher! Both are £10 and illustrate

the branch view of her vicious right-wing policies. They can be obtained from the branch website www.aslef-favershambranch.co.uk or from Andy Cooke at andycooke69@hotmail.com or (mobile) 07771 923831.

Jump in the carriage with Coleridge

The railway has become part of our physical, and psychological, landscape.

KEITH RICHMOND dips into a new anthology to rediscover the poetry of departures and brief encounters...

WE HAVE, for a couple of hundred years, enjoyed a romance with the railway here in Britain, so it's not surprising that so many poets have written about trains, passengers and journeys, and the landscape, urban or rural, passing by on the other side of the glass.

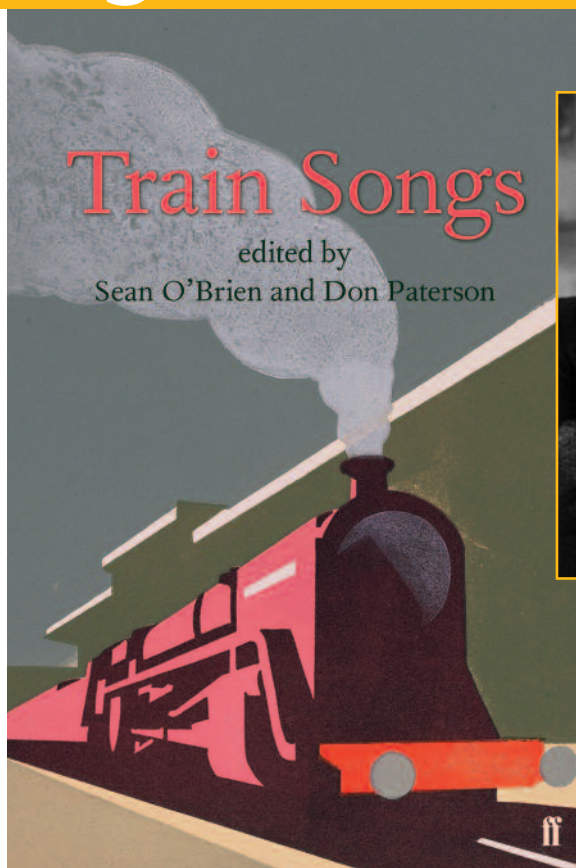
Not that all poets have been on board. In 1844 William Wordsworth wrote to the *Morning Post* from Rydal Mount *On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway*: 'Is then no nook of English ground secure / From rash assault? Schemes of retirement sown / In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure / As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown, / Must perish; – how can they this blight endure? 'Mind you, this was not the great romantic Wordsworth, the young radical of *The Prelude* who welcomed the French Revolution – 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!' – but the grumpy old Tory git who didn't want the great unwashed turning up in the Lake District.

‘This is the Night Mail crossing the Border, / Bringing the cheque and the postal order’ – WH Auden

Train Songs is an inspired idea. It's a collection of 100 lyrics – most of them poems, a few of them songs – about the railway and the stuff – the people and the places, the journeys and the landscapes – between and around our railway lines.

Some of the poems, and some of the poets, are well known. There's WH Auden – 'Letters for the rich, letters for the poor, / The shop at the corner, the girl next door' – Edward Thomas – 'Yes. I remember Adlestrop – / The name, because one afternoon / Of heat the express train drew up there / Unwontedly. It was late June' – TS Eliot – *Skimbleshanks: the Railway Cat* – and Thomas Hardy – *The Missed Train* – as well as a rich slice of Americana from Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and William Carlos Williams.

Some of the poets, such as Katrina Porteous, Mark Waldron, and Peter Didsbury – 'They all jump in the carriage with Coleridge, /



WH Auden (top right) and Edward Thomas and the poetry of trains

as the mighty lexicon twangs' – are not so well known, and some of the poems – such as *The Away-Bound Train* by Les Murray and *Now That I Hear Trains* by Hugo Williams – are only tangentially about trains. But that doesn't matter.

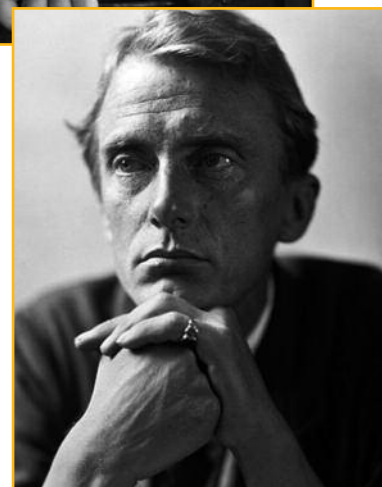
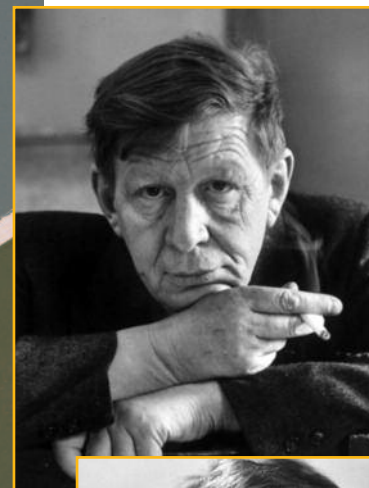
‘Can't you hear the whistle blowing, / Rise up so early in the morn' – Anon

Because we learn about 'bright knots of rail'; 'standing Pullmans'; 'signal light' and 'tunnelled gloom'; of 'a nondescript express in from the South'; 'the clearing in the forest of iron and steam'; and 'the slow train from Midsummer Norton and Mumby Row'.

Robert Louis Stevenson, like Auden in *Night Mail*, imitates the rhythmic pulses and rattles of the train – 'Faster than fairies, faster than witches, / Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches' – as does Murray – 'the carriage-wheels moan / on their winter-wet, wind-polished rails' – and John Betjeman – 'The train at Pershore station was waiting that Sunday night / Gas light on the platform, in my carriage electric light'.

Many of these poems are designed to delight – and they do – but there are three sombre war poems by Wilfred Owen, Frances Cornford, and Thom Gunn; while Philip Larkin, in *Friday Night in the Royal Station Hotel*, notices 'Through open doors, the dining-room declares / A larger loneliness of knives and glass / And silence laid like carpet'; and Ian Hamilton, in one particularly sinister line, observes 'The last train / Is simmering outside'.

There are a few songs in here, by Robert



Johnson, Tom Waits, and Sam Phillips and Junior Parker, as well as that prolific author Anonymous, and some unexpected treats – *Train Ride* by Ruth Stone, *The Orient Express* by Randall Jarrell, *Corner Seat* by Louis MacNeice – alongside the more familiar pleasures of *The Express* by Stephen Spender, *The Whitsun Weddings* by Philip Larkin, and *The Slow Train* by Flanders and Swann.

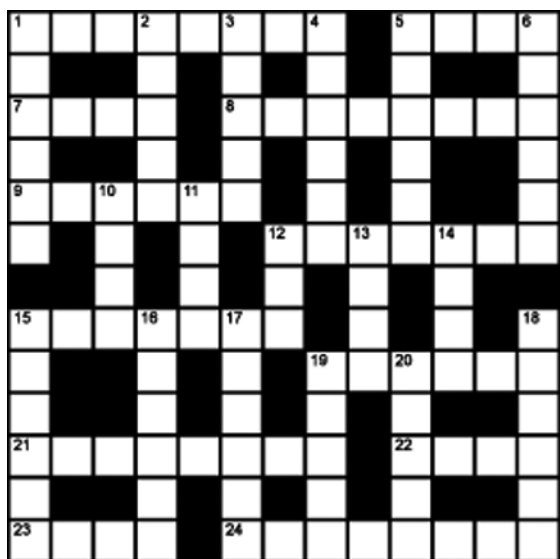
‘The train will come tomorrow year, / The signals clamber into signs, / The gates will open on the track / Where weeds have grown among the lines’ – Alan Brownjohn

William McGonagall's famously bad poem *The Tay Bridge Disaster* – 'Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay! / Alas! I am very sorry to say / That ninety lives have been taken away / On the last Sabbath day of 1879, / Which will be remember'd for a very long time' is included here as an ironic, post-modern joke, but there are a couple of other verses – *One Train May Hide Another* by Kenneth Koch and *Tullynoe* by Paul Durcan – which would have been better shunted into the sidings.

But, quibbles aside, this is an excellent anthology on the poetry of the train and all of those who ride the rails.

● *Train Songs* edited by Sean O'Brien and Don Paterson is published by Faber & Faber at £12.99

Prize Crossword No. 91 set by Zebedee



Solution to prize crossword No 90 which appeared in the October 2013 edition of the ASLEF Journal

Across 1 Specific 5 Shed 7 Cuba 8 Napoleon 9 Eighty 12 Arbiter 15 Tangent 19 Walrus 21 Unbiased 22 Sane 23 Hops 24 Runner-up

Down 1 Sacked 2 Crash 3 Funny 4 Cipher 5 Salami 6 Danger 10 Gain 11 Tine 12 Ait 13 Bala 14 Tier 15 Thrush 16 Genius 17 Nasser 18 Asleep 19 Widen 20 Lisle

Congratulations to **Mike Sullivan** of **Clydach, Swansea** who was last month's winner

Across

1 Chinese dialect (8)
5 Split (4)
7 Destroy (4)
8 Having great material or monetary value (8)
9 Meagre (6)
12 Game played with 22 balls (7)
15 Bewilder (7)
19 "Famous Five" author (6)
21 Resembling tennis but played on a table with paddles and a light hollow ball (4-4)
22 No peach, we hear - this hybrid fruit (4)

23 Exist (4)

24 (plural) The lay members of a male religious order (8)

Down

1 Melancholy (6)
2 Currency of Algeria (5)
3 Theatrical show (5)
4 Wrestling hold (6)
5 Spanish dictator (6)
6 Guardian, especially of museum collection (6)
10 Way, way off (4)
11 Tarnish (4)
12 Cardinal number (3)
13 Rounded like an egg (4)
14 Scottish garment (4)

15 Urge forward (6)

16 Capital of the Czech Republic (6)

17 Put in a grave position (6)

18 Song, "____ Love Call" (6)

19 Military instrument (5)

20 Teenager (5)



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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Thanks for all your responses to the 90th ASLEF crossword in the October edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 November

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